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ABSTRACT

The research reported is an attempt at construct validation of a proposed measure of administrator authenticity -- Seeman's scale of ambivalence toward leadership ideology. Seeman had implied that leaders who are more ambivalent would be less susceptible to reality distortion. Using Rokeach's dogmatism scale as an indicator of susceptibility to reality distortion, the research reported here failed to support this assumption. This may reflect some doubt on the construct validity of the only existing authenticity index in the current research literature. (Author)

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AUTHENTICITY AND THEORIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE BEHAVIOR

by
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Since Sartre's (1948: 92-93) introduction of the authenticity-inauthenticity concept, it has appeared with increasing frequency in the literature dealing with organizational and administrative behavior. For example, the concept guided the research of Rome and Rome (1967) on Leviathan, a simulated organization, although they indicated that they had no particularly fixed preconceptions about what forms authenticity must take. Their (Rome and Rome, 1967: 185) definition of authenticity for an organization paralleled that of Sartre's (1948: 90) for an individual: "A hierarchical organization, in short, like an individual person, is 'authentic' to the extent that, throughout its leadership, it accepts its finitude, uncertainty, and contingency; realizes its capacity for responsibility and choice; acknowledges guilt and errors; fulfills its creative managerial potential for flexible planning, growth, and charter or policy formation; and responsibly participates in the wider community."

Halpin and Croft (1963a, b; 1966) used authenticity as a high-order intervening variable in attempting to explain certain findings on social-psychological climates in their study of 71 public elementary schools. They (Halpin and Croft, 1966: 204) defined authenticity as professional roles remaining secondary to what the individual, himself is as a person. Etzioni (1968: 881) recently proposed that authenticity could be used to describe a social condition in which the appearance and underlying structure are both responsive to basic human needs.

Although the concept seems promising for describing organizational and administrative behavior, it has not yielded readily to attempts at measurement. In the applications cited, the concept probably represents a kind of summative

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unit, according to Dubin (1969: 62) —— useful in a somewhat global sense, but of little value in development of theoretical models.

Seeman (1960, 1966) is the only investigator to propose a direct measure of inauthenticity. Although his research focused on public school superintendents and principals, he speculated that institutional leaders in general might be more likely to show inauthentic behavior than their subordinates. Suggesting his measure of ambivalence toward leadership ideology as an index of inauthenticity, he (Seeman 1960, 1966) indicated that more ambivalent school leaders were less likely to show reality distortion than less ambivalent leaders.

The purpose of this paper is to report recent empirical research on the construct validity of Seeman's (1960, 1966) proposed measure of inauthenticity in leaders.

Inauthenticity, Ambivalence, and Dogmatism

Referring to certain research data of Adorno et al. (1950), Rinder and Campbell (1952: 270) speculated that persons using repression, denial, and reaction formation in handling of ambivalence and conflict might be called inauthentic. Seeman (1960: 142-143) endorsed this viewpoint and further specified (1960: 103) that inauthenticity might be applied to "the leader who lets his occupancy of high-status position influence his decision making in an unrealistic way because of the stereotype he holds regarding the requirement of that position."

Seeman (1960: 58-59) called attention to observed discrepancies between interview and questionnaire data on ambivalence toward leadership ideology in his research with school superintendents and principals. He found, for example, that superintendents who earned low scores on his questionnaire on ambivalence

toward leadership ideology confided during personal followup interviews that actually they had experienced far more difficulty in making choices on the ambivalence questions than their scores indicated. He (1960: 34) pointed out "this readiness to deny choice difficulty may be a case of 'inauthentic' leader behavior —— that is, responding with conviction as 'real leaders' should... ."

While recognizing the possibility that institutional leaders, as a general class of subjects, might well prove collectively to be more likely to deny the ambivalence of leadership ideology than subordinates, Seeman (1960) also implicitly proposed that within this sociological class of subjects, institutional leaders, there would be individual differences in reality orientation. Seeman (1960: 56) observed some slight support for the view that "those leaders who might be called 'realists' are those who neither deny choice difficulty nor exaggerate it."

Although initial Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicated statistical independence between school leaders' scores on the measure of ambivalence toward leadership ideology and an evaluation and various descriptions of their leader behavior by teachers, slight curvilinear tendencies observed in the data prompted him to reanalyze it using the correlation ratio (eta). Moderate correlation coefficients resulted, only one of which attained the .05 level of confidence. In considering this finding, however, Seeman (1969: 56) proposed that "here are tentative grounds for belief that those who may be called the 'realists' ... are described as most effective."

Similarly, Argyris (1957: 207) suggested that effective leadership might be described as reality-centered leadership, and that choices of leadership pattern should be based upon an accurate diagnosis of the situation in which the leader

is imbedded. Halpin and Croft (1966: 206) noted that Argyris' reality-centered leadership appeared to refer to leader authenticity, but none of these writers proposed a direct approach to measurement of these concepts.

Rokeach, however, has developed a theory and assessment procedure which seem to hold some promise. He (1960: 57) defined the extent to which a person's belief system was open as:

> the extent to which a person can receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information received from the outside on its own intrinsic merits, unencumbered by irrelevant factors in the situation arising from within the person or from the outside.

He developed a dogmatism scale and found that ambivalence toward parents was more frequently expressed by open minded subjects than by those who were closed minded, a finding which replicated data on anxiety and ambivalence toward authority figures in Adorno (1950).

Rokeach's (1960) dogmatism scale seemed to be a valid criterion measure, independent of Seeman's (1960) ambivalence scale, for assessing the degree to which a leader was reality centered or cognitively open in the psychological sense. It was hypothesized that school leaders earning high scores on Seeman's (1960) measure of ambivalence toward leadership ideology would tend to earn low scores on Rokeach's dogmatism scale, low scores indicating open mindedness. Some of Halpin and Crofts' speculations tend to support this particular hypothesis. They (1966: 230) suggested that Seeman's ambivalence measure, if valid as an index of inauthenticity, should discriminate between administrators and staff members of schools having open as opposed to closed organizational climates. Moreover, they (Halpin and Croft, 1966: 170) noted that open mindedness and closed mindedness were analogous to their conceptions of open and closed organizational climates.

Empirical Test and Findings

The first test of the hypothesis was made during the summer of 1968 at a 2-week summer workshop or institute for practicing school administrators and supervisors. This was conducted and sponsored by the college of education of a large, midwestern state university and cosponsored by the several professional associations of public school administrators of that particular state. The 34 participants in the workshop, representing a number of midwestern states, were informed that the proposed research had no relation to their work in the institute, and they all agreed to cooperate in the study. First Seeman's (1960) Leadership-Ideology and Ambivalence Scale was administered, then Rokeach's (1960) Dogmatism Scale, Form E.

The Seeman scale (1960: 142-143) is a 10 item, forced-choice measure adapted from Guttman and Suchman (1947). Each forced-choice item on leadership ideology is followed by a question about the difficulty of the decision, that is, the ambivalence scale, which was the major concern of the present research. Response alternatives on the ambivalence scale range from very hard with a score of 4, though not at all hard with a score of 1, although Seeman's 1960 original procedure had a possible range from 0 to 9. Total scores could range form 10 to 40. Two sample items from the 10 item scale, together with accompanying instructions to respondents, are:

> This section deals with your opinion about an ideal school leader.
>
> Directions: Please make a choice for every question. Check the answer you choose and then indicate for each how hard it was for you to make your choice.
>
> 1. a. Do you think an ideal leader should generally
> _____ fit his ideas into a group discussion in about the same way as other members of the group?
>
> _____ tell the group at the outset what his ideas on the subject are?

b. How hard was it for you to make you choice?
__4__ Very hard __3__ Fairly hard __2__ Not so hard __1__ Not hard at all

2. a. Where a student's passing or failing is doubtful, do you think an ideal leader should
____ leave the decision up to you?
____ pretty much take responsibility for the final decision?
b. How hard was it for you to make your choice?
____ Very hard ____ Fairly hard ____ Not so hard ____ Not hard at all

The Dogmatism Scale, Form E, is a Likert-type scale consisting of 40 items (Rokeach, 1960: 72-80). Total scores can range from 40 to 280, with low scorers considered open minded, and high scorers closed minded, that is, more dogmatic. Two sample items from the Dogmatism Scale, Form E, together with instructions to respondents, are:

> Directions: The following is a study of what the general public thinks and feels about a number of important social and personal questions. The best answer to each statement below is you personal opinion. . . Mark each statement in the left margin according to how much you agree or disagree with it. Please mark every one. Write +1, +2, +3, or -1, -2, -3, depending on how you feel in each case.
>
> +1: I AGREE A LITTLE -1: I DISAGREE A LITTLE
> +2: I AGREE ON THE WHOLE -2: I DISAGREE ON THE WHOLE
> +3: I AGREE VERY MUCH -3: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH
>
> 1. The United States and Russia have just about nothing in common.
>
> 2. It is only natural that a person would have a much better acquaintance with ideas he believes in than with ideas he opposes.

A Pearson product-moment correlational analysis of the data from the 34 workshop participants yielded a coefficient of +.88, significant beyond the .001 level of confidence, which contradicted the hypothesis. Seeman (1960) had observed curvilinear tendencies in a scatterplot analysis of his original ambivalence data. Therefore a scatterplot analysis was made, but no curvilinear tendency was evident, so the Pearson product-moment linear correlational model was considered appropriate in this analysis.

Further studies were undertaken with four additional samples of subjects, graduate students in education at a large, southern, state university. Three groups included practicing or student public school administrators: 19 in an introductory school administration course in the fall of 1968, 21 in a leadership training laboratory in the spring of 1969, and 22 in a leadership training laboratory in the spring of 1970. The fourth group, 33 students in an advanced educational psychology course, composed almost exclusively of classroom teachers in public schools, was included because Seeman (1960: 52-54) had found that teachers responded to his scales somewhat differently from superintendents and principals. Test procedures for each of these additional four samples of subjects repeated those employed with the first sample. Since three of these samples were smaller than the desired minimum of 30 for use of the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis used with the first sample, Spearman's rank-difference method was applied across all four samples.

Resulting correlation coefficients, all in the positive direction and attaining significance at or beyong the .01 level of confidence, for each of the four samples were, +.68 for the 19 subjects in the introductory school administration course; +.56 for the 21 students in the leadership training laboratory during the spring of 1969; +.58 for 22 practicing or aspiring public school supervisors enrolled in the leadership training laboratory during the spring of 1970; and +.59 for the 33 students in the advanced educational psychology course.

Thus, data from all five samples of subjects contradict the hypothesis. Seeman's (1960) measure of ambivalence toward leadership ideology appears to be related highly and positively to Rokeach's (1960) Dogmatism Scale.

DISCUSSION

This finding defies the logic of the guiding hypothisis. Moreover, additional evidence indicated that only one item of the 10-item leadership ideology scale, item 9, was related to dogmatism, as indicated by point biserial correlations between the two choice alternatives on the leadership ideology subscale and scores on the Dogmatism Scale. A correlation coefficient of -.54 contradicted the expectation that the particpative rather than the authoritarian alternative would tend to be chosen by the open minded subjects.

On the basis of the findings it is not possible to specify clearly whether Seeman's (1960) ambivalence measure, that is, index of inauthenticity, Rokeach's (1960) Dogmatism Scale, or the construct of authenticity and inauthenticity lack validity. As noted by Cronbach and Meehl (1967: 63):

> If two tests are presumed to measure the same construct, a correlation between them is predicted. ... If the obtained correlation departs from the expection, however, there is no way to know whether the fault lies in test A, test B, or the formation of the construct.

All we really know, based on the evidence of the present study, is that something is wrong, either logically or empirically; for the anticipated relationship between ambivalence and dogmatism was rather forcibly contradicted by the empirical data.

Although these findings provide no real basis for assigning greater or lesser weights to the construct validity of one or the other of the two measures, if it were possible to assume the hypothesis sound, one may impute greater veridity to Rokeach's dogmatism scale as a measure of authenticity in the psychological sense of the term, in that there has been more research on it (Rokeach, 1960). However, it must be noted that Seeman's (1960) primary research concern was with the sociological, not the psychological, aspects of ambivalence toward leadership ideology and inauthenticity. He (1960: 52) specified that "the concept of ambivalence is

used here, not in the sense of deep-lying unresolved personality conflicts, but simply as difficulty of choice."

Unfortunately, while appearing to possess considerable promise for theories of organizational and administrative behavior, the concept of authenticity and inauthenticity continues to be behaviorally elusive, as demonstrated by the research just reported. While Seeman's (1960) ambivalence measure was conceived within the context of sociological research, the findings reported here might be construed as casting some doubt on its validity, at least as a psychological index of inauthenticity.

The elusiveness of the concept should not be too surprising, for even the most cursory review of the literature dealing with the concept indicates considerable complexity (Brumbaugh, 1969). Authenticity, as a construct, is quite likely to be multidimensional. To propose one approach to its empirical definition, therefore, is merely to scratch the surface of the problem. Many such attempts will be needed if authenticity as a scientific construct is to be of use eventually to the researcher and theoretician.

SUMMARY

Although the authenticity-inauthenticity concept has appeared with increasing frequency in the literature dealing with organizational and administrative behavior, its typical use has been in a global sense, but of little value in developing theoretical models. Seeman (1960) thus far remains the only investigator to propose a direct measure of inauthenticity. Suggesting his ambivalence toward leadership ideology measure as an index of inauthenticity, Seeman (1960: 56) implied that more ambivalent school leaders were less susceptible to reality distortion than less ambivalent leaders. Rokeach's dogmatism scale was considered to be an

index of susceptibility to reality distortion or authenticity in the psychological sense, but the findings contradicted the hypothesis that ambivalence will be inversely related to dogmatism, thus calling into some question the validity of the ambivalence measure.

While the authenticity-inauthenticity concept has inspired the confidence of a number of researchers of organizational and administrative behavior, its real promise as a viable conceptual unit in the formation and development of theory has yet to be demonstrated.

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